



Menu du Jour

06 Jun 06

Creole Pork Chops

Louisiana Rice

Grilled Asparagus

(Serves two)

Creole Pork Chops

Louisiana cooking has gained a reputation – not entirely undeserved – as being fiery and hot. Creole cooking is milder with complex and aromatic heat instead of just a scorching burn. Creole cooking reflects a combination of culinary traditions from the original European colonists and African slaves along with influences from Native Americans who taught the Europeans how to use regional ingredients.

Cajun cooking is a rustic cuisine developed in South Louisiana. Cajuns, descendants of the French Acadians forced out of Canada by the English in the mid-1700s, settled in the Atchafalaya River basin. Cajuns typically cook one dish in a large pot, stretching whatever meat or fish was available and serving it over rice, another regional staple.

2 pork loin chops, about 8 ounces each
2 tablespoons canola oil
1 cup uncooked Louisiana (Cocodrie) or brown rice
2 1/2 cups chicken stock
2 tablespoons Creole seasoning (recipe follows)
2 to 2 1/2 cups Creole sauce (recipe follows)

Prepare the Creole sauce if there is none in the refrigerator (shame on you!). Rinse the chops and pat dry. Season both sides of the chops with Creole seasoning.

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees F.

Heat a large cast iron skillet over medium-high heat. Add the oil. When the oil begins to smoke, add the chops and brown for 1 1/2 to 2 minutes. Flip and brown on the other side for 1 1/2 to 2 minutes. Remove the chops from the skillet and pour off any drippings.

Return the chops to the skillet and cover with the Creole sauce. Cover the skillet and transfer to the preheated oven. Cook the chops, turning occasionally, for about 1 1/2 hours or until very tender.

While the chops are baking, prepare the rice according to package directions substituting 2 1/2 cups of chicken stock for the water.

Remove the chops from the skillet and keep warm. Place the skillet on the stovetop and continue cooking the sauce over high heat, stirring frequently, until thickened to the desired consistency.



(Chef's note: These chops could also be grilled over medium-high heat for about 5 to 7 minutes per side and then transferred to a skillet or Dutch oven containing the warmed Creole sauce. They could also be prepared on the stove top by simmering over medium-low heat, partially covered, for about 1 hour.)

To serve, spoon the rice onto a warmed serving plate. Arrange the pork chops atop the rice. Ladle sauce alongside and on top of the chops. Garnish the plate with freshly chopped flat leaf parsley and chopped green onions.

Creole Seasoning

A number of companies are now selling Creole and Cajun seasoning blends. Most of them contain much more salt than this recipe and are somewhat expensive to purchase. Making your own seasoning is more economical and the blend can be customized to your preference. Stored in an airtight container in a cool place, this seasoning mix will keep for about 1 month.

2 tablespoons hot Hungarian paprika
2 teaspoons coarse kosher salt
1 tablespoon cracked black pepper
1 tablespoon crushed red pepper flakes
2 teaspoons granulated garlic
2 teaspoons onion powder
2 teaspoons dried basil
2 teaspoons dried thyme

Combine all of the ingredients in a mixing bowl and mix well.

Yields about 1 cup

Creole Sauce

This is the classic sauce that most New Orleans residents call "red gravy." Creole sauce is extremely versatile in New Orleans cuisine and Louisiana cooking as it is the basis for so many different entrees. A number of variations exists but they all contain the same basic ingredients: tomatoes, onion, celery, bell pepper, garlic, chicken stock, hot sauce, seasonings and green onions.

3 tablespoons unsalted butter
1 cup diced yellow onion
1 cup diced green bell pepper
1 cup diced celery
4 green onions, finely sliced
1 clove garlic, finely minced
2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon coarse kosher salt
1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper



- 1 teaspoon dried thyme
- 1 tablespoon freshly chopped flat leaf parsley
- 1 (28-ounce) can diced tomatoes
- 1 (6-ounce) can tomato sauce
- 1 cup chicken stock
- 2 tablespoons Louisiana-style hot sauce
- 1 teaspoon red wine vinegar

Heat the butter in a large saucepan over medium heat. Add the onion, green pepper, celery, green onions and garlic. Cook for about 5 minutes or until the onions are translucent. Sift the flour over the vegetable and stir well to combine; cook for about 1 minute. Add the salt, pepper, thyme and parsley. Pour in the diced tomatoes, tomato sauce, chicken stock, hot sauce and vinegar. Cover and simmer 20 minutes, stirring occasionally. Remove from the heat and adjust seasonings.

(Chef's note: If desired, this sauce could be puréed in a blender for a smooth consistency. The sauce freezes well and may be stored frozen for up to 3 months.)

Grilled Asparagus

Fresh asparagus marinated in Italian dressing and seasoned with salt and pepper is cooked quickly over medium-high heat on the grill. Enjoy the natural flavor of the asparagus as it is gently caramelized.

- 1/2 pound fresh asparagus
- 1 cup zesty Italian dressing
- Coarse kosher salt
- Freshly ground black pepper

Snap off the tough ends of the asparagus. Place the asparagus in a shallow roasting pan and pour the Italian dressing into the pan. Marinate for 30 minutes.

Preheat the grill for medium-high direct cooking and grill the asparagus, turning often, for about 5 minutes or until the stalks begin to caramelize.

Remove the asparagus from the grill and season with salt and pepper.



Cooking & Presentation



Asparagus On The Grill



Seared Pork Chops

From The Kitchen Of Michael H. Stines, Ph.B.
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Creole Chops, Steamed Rice and Grilled Asparagus